



Ladybird Kindergarten

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	508724
Inspection date	01 February 2007
Inspector	Jill Nugent
Setting Address	Little Warley & Childerditch Village Hall, Magpie Lane, Little Warley, BRENTWOOD, Essex, CM13 3DZ
Telephone number	01277 212288
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Registered person	Christel Monika Harvey
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ladybird Kindergarten registered in 1993. It operates from the village hall in Little Warley, near Brentwood. Children have access to an outdoor play area. The kindergarten is open each weekday from 09:15 to 12:15 during term time.

A maximum of 24 children may attend the kindergarten at any one time. Currently there are 39 children, from two to five years, on roll, and of these, 30 children receive funding for nursery education. The kindergarten supports children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

There are seven staff working with the children, of whom, four hold relevant early years qualifications. The principal holds a level four qualification and is working towards an Early Years degree.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted effectively as staff have good procedures in place. All the necessary medical permissions are sought and records are maintained appropriately. Children are protected from infection because parents are asked to exclude children who have an infectious illness. If children become ill whilst at kindergarten, they are made comfortable in a quiet place while waiting for a parent. They receive good care in the event of an accident as staff are well qualified in first aid and have good access to equipment. Staff are very aware of the needs of children who have allergies and have attended training in the use of epipens. Therefore, children are well looked after and kept healthy in their care.

Staff are attentive to hygiene and ensure that children are cared for in a clean environment. They promote children's awareness of good hygiene in various ways. Children learn how germs can be carried from hand to hand and, therefore, why it is important to wash their hands at certain times. They are reminded to wash their hands after going to the toilet, and before snack. After snack they place their bowls, and beakers, into a bowl of water so that these can be easily cleaned for further use. Children's dietary needs are met well. They enjoy a selection of healthy snacks, including fruit and vegetables, and show an increasing understanding of which foods are good for them. They have good access to drinking water throughout the session. Staff ensure that children with allergies eat a correct diet. Consequently, children are well nourished and are becoming aware of how to keep themselves healthy.

Children enjoy regular opportunities for physical activity both indoors and outdoors. They like playing ring games and have fun joining in parachute games. They learn new skills, for example, when playing with balls, and develop their control and co-ordination using large equipment, such as, bikes and a trampoline. Young children enjoy the opportunity to move freely around the hall while exploring different toys. Children also have good opportunities to go for walks in the surrounding countryside and enjoy having picnics. These activities encourage them to enjoy physical exercise and keep fit.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and safe environment. The hall is made attractive for parents and children with colourful displays of art work, photographs and posters. Resources and equipment are set out around the main room to interest children when they arrive each day. The entrance door is always kept locked so that children are secure on the premises. There is a bell entry system in place for visitors so that they can be easily monitored. Staff sign children in and out as they arrive and leave the building. However, children are not always well supervised at the end of the session and some wander into the entrance area looking for a parent. Consequently, there is a potential risk of children leaving the premises without an adult.

Staff prioritise children's safety while they are on the premises and take good steps to minimise risks to children. For example, they always ensure that the doors to the kitchen and storage

cupboard are locked so that these areas are inaccessible to children. They carry out daily safety checks, according to a checklist, so that any new risks are highlighted immediately. There are good fire precautions in place around the hall. Children are aware of what to do in the event of an emergency as they regularly practise fire drills. Children play safely outdoors as the area is fenced off and the side gate is kept locked. When going out walking, staff ensure that there are sufficient adults present so that children are closely supervised. Consequently, children are kept safe in their care.

Children use a variety of resources and equipment, all of which are safe and suitable. The toys and games are of good quality and checked for safety on a regular basis. The resources are sorted into containers and made easily accessible to children so that they can explore independently. Staff rotate the resources according to a rota to provide variety for children over time. Children are learning to keep themselves safe while they play. Staff remind them to sit properly on chairs and to walk carefully around the room. They participate in activities designed to teach them about road safety and fire safety. Therefore, children are becoming aware of their own safety. Staff have a good understanding of child protection issues and know what to do if they have any concerns. Children are only collected from kindergarten by a known adult. Confidentiality is maintained at all times. Therefore, children are well protected in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are well settled and play happily. They enjoy choosing from different activities, playing together in groups and sometimes independently. They have good relationships with each other and particularly enjoy imaginative play, for example, serving each other food in the home corner and taking dolls for a walk in buggies. Children are keen to explore on their own, for instance, using construction equipment to build models. They are growing in confidence and eager to have a go at new activities. They confidently ask to have a turn and willingly talk with adults about what they are doing. They are gaining an awareness of literacy and mathematics when exploring mark-making tools, matching pictures and completing puzzles. Staff praise them for their achievements and, thereby, boost their self esteem.

Children respond eagerly to staff who interact with them and suggest new ideas to enhance their play. Children are encouraged to develop communication skills when adults engage them in conversation during activities. There are opportunities for children to be creative, for example, using crayons, scissors and shiny bits to make their own pictures. They take part in role play and this helps them to use their imagination in different play situations. However, staff are not yet making full use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to ensure that children have a wide choice of activities and opportunities to extend their skills. During a long session, children sometimes lack choice and begin to show signs of boredom. Individual needs are not always met effectively as too many children attempt to take part in small group activities at the same time. Consequently, children are not always able to extend their learning in different situations.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making progress towards the early learning goals in all areas, although they lack regular opportunities to consolidate and extend their skills in literacy and numeracy. They enjoy listening to stories and comment on what happens as they listen. They learn about the sounds, and shapes, of letters of the alphabet and older children take home reading books. They learn to recognise letters when fitting together an alphabet puzzle or copying their names. However, they are not able to extend these pre-reading skills through daily discussion of letter shapes, and sounds, and access to familiar words. In mathematical activities, children learn to count and recognise numerals, for example, when taking part in table-top games or completing number puzzles. They learn about different shapes and patterns when threading coloured beads. They sometimes practise counting as a group but this is not a regular activity. In play activities they are not always encouraged to use mathematical language and develop their number skills. Overall, children have limited opportunities to extend their learning in language, literacy and mathematics.

Children learn about their local environment. They enjoy nature walks and talk about the seasons and the weather. In cooking activities they discover how things change after mixing and cooking. Children show good control when using their hands and tools, for example, rubbing and rolling dough to make scones. They learn how to fit together pieces of construction equipment in different ways and explore technological equipment, such as, 'remote controls'. They have good opportunities to develop body skills when taking part in physical activities, for example, travelling and balancing on large equipment. In creative activities, children are able to explore materials and find ways of expressing themselves creatively, for instance, decorating hedgehog pictures using paper and sticks. Children discover different sounds when playing musical instruments and enjoy singing. Overall, they are developing a wide range of physical and creative skills.

Staff make use of various themes when planning the educational provision. They ensure a balanced coverage of all six learning areas in the written plans. The termly plans show good detail and explain the learning intentions clearly in terms of stepping stones. The daily group plans are particularly clear and able to be used effectively to promote, and extend, children's learning in small groups. Staff interact well with children in the adult led and free choice activities. They work directly with the children throughout the session, playing and talking with them. They ask questions to encourage children to think but do not take full advantage of situations to extend their learning in the areas of language and literacy and mathematical development. They make good use of a letter and number of the week to raise children's awareness in these areas but this is not always developed during the week. In group activities, staff observe children's responses, and achievements, and assess whether the learning intention has been met. This helps them to gauge children's progress towards the early learning goals. However, they do not have a manageable system in place for recording this progress and so can not use the information effectively to guide their future planning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have a sense of belonging. They are welcomed each day with a wave, or a handshake, and this helps them to feel special. They have good relationships with staff and this makes for

a calm, easy going atmosphere. Children enjoy talking about their families and their lives at home. Staff are always very attentive towards children. They are quick to praise, for example, when looking at awards children have brought in to show. Consequently, children feel their contribution is valued. Staff have a caring attitude and ensure that children who are unhappy are given extra attention. Children are generally encouraged to feel included in all activities. However, younger ones sometimes feel left out at small group times as the groups are often too large. Children are learning to respect others in their community. They learn about diversity in society through using resources which reflect differences in people. They take part in activities based on cultural and religious festivals and enjoy learning some phrases in other languages, such as, German and French. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children play harmoniously together and disputes rarely arise. Staff have effective strategies in place for managing behaviour and liaise with parents if necessary. Consequently, children behave well and are generally aware of their boundaries. However, they become inattentive sometimes at large group times when not fully engaged by staff. This limits their ability to benefit fully from the learning experience. Children are learning to make choices from the various resources and activities on offer and are developing their personal independence. For example, at snack time they pour their own drinks and choose food for their individual bowls. They are developing good social skills and respond positively to requests from staff. In this way they learn to work together and make a positive contribution to the setting.

Staff work in partnership with parents and carers. They have a settling in procedure for new children and parents are welcome to help out during sessions if they so wish. Parents are kept up to date with news and events through regular newsletters. If a parent wishes to raise a concern this is recorded in the complaints notebook. However, parents are not made aware of the procedure involved as the policy on complaints has not been updated according to recent changes in regulations. If parents do not know how to raise a concern the continuity of care for their children may be adversely affected.

The partnership with parents and carers with respect to the nursery education is satisfactory. The kindergarten leader discusses the Foundation Stage with parents and they are invited to open days when they can exchange information about their children's progress with staff. Parents receive information about the current theme. They respond happily to requests for children to bring in relevant items and this helps to involve them in their children's learning. However, they do not receive any written information about the Foundation Stage, either in the brochure or on the notice board. Therefore, they may not always be aware of the different aspects of this curriculum. This restricts them in their ability to become fully involved in their children's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The kindergarten's policies and procedures work in practice to promote the outcomes for children. All paperwork is easily accessible and the written plans for nursery education are kept up to date and readily available. Parents complete registration forms for their children and provide information to help staff meet individual needs. Any information about children is kept

in a secure place so that staff can ensure confidentiality. Attendance registers for children and staff are maintained appropriately. There are good employment and induction procedures in place for new staff. The kindergarten leader is keen for staff to attend training courses and so contribute to the continual improvement of the provision. However, there is no appraisal system in place to monitor this and so staff's training needs are not always met effectively. They have done very little training since the last inspection. This has an impact on the ongoing improvement of the provision as a whole.

Staff make good use of the available space and time. They offer a choice of activities for children in the hall and follow a set daily routine. This allows time for free play, large and small group activities and outdoor sessions. Staff have a high regard for the well-being of the children and are particularly attentive to their health and safety. They work to a rota so that each member of staff can learn to take on different responsibilities. This works well in providing good support for children and ensures that they are well cared for in the setting. However, group times are not always organised effectively and, therefore, do not always succeed in engaging and including all children. Staff manage transition times well, making use of a bell to alert children to the changeover and thereby contributing to the smooth running of the session. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. The kindergarten leader takes responsibility for organising each session, ensuring the smooth running of the daily provision and effective deployment of staff. She arranges regular planning meetings and is active in developing the educational provision, for example, seeking a new system for assessing children's progress. However, she is not totally aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and has not responded satisfactorily to the key issues raised at the previous inspection. Consequently, staff have no guidelines to help them to implement the Foundation Stage effectively. They lack understanding of how to use the Foundation Stage guidance to promote and extend children's learning. This affects children's ability to make good progress towards the early learning goals.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous care inspection the kindergarten was asked to carry out a written risk assessment of the premises, revise the child protection policy, ensure that the main door key is always accessible and develop staff's awareness of behaviour management. A risk assessment is now carried out annually, the child protection policy is reviewed regularly and the door key is always accessible. Staff have attended training in behaviour management. This response has led to an overall improvement in the safety and care of children.

At the previous nursery education inspection the kindergarten was asked to review the organisation of small group times in order to meet children's individual needs and to develop staff's awareness of how to extend children's learning through play. Although staff have looked at alternative ways of organising small group times these still do not meet children's needs effectively. Staff have not yet had the opportunity to increase their awareness and understanding of how to extend children's learning through play. Consequently, there has been no improvement in the provision of nursery education for children.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that children do not leave the premises unsupervised, this refers to security procedures at the end of the session
- extend the opportunities for children to learn through play, for example, by making use of the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- update the complaints policy in line with the changes in regulations
- review the organisation of small and large group times so that all children are included
- introduce a system for monitoring the training needs of staff.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- develop a manageable and effective system for assessing children's progress towards the early learning goals
- develop staff's understanding of the Foundation Stage with respect to extending children's learning in the areas of language, literacy and mathematics
- ensure that all parents receive useful information about the Foundation Stage of learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education (HMI ref no 2599)* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk